



Brownfields Showcase Community Chicago, IL

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

Brownfields are abandoned, idled or underused industrial and commercial properties where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived contamination. In May 1997, Vice President Gore announced a Brownfields National Partnership to bring together the resources of more than 15 federal agencies to address local cleanup and reuse issues in a more coordinated manner. This multi-agency partnership has pledged support to 16 "Brownfields Showcase Communities"—models demonstrating the benefits of collaborative activity on brownfields. The designated Brownfields Showcase Communities are distributed across the country and vary by size, resources, and community type. A wide range of support will be leveraged, depending on the particular needs of each Showcase Community.

BACKGROUND

The Brownfields National Partnership has selected the City of Chicago as a Brownfields Showcase Community. The Chicago Brownfields Initiative, established in 1993, links environmental cleanup with industrial real estate development in order to create jobs and generate tax revenue. The city's 1995 Brownfields Forum Final Report and Action Plan identified more than 60 barriers to redevelopment. Solutions already implemented include a property tax incentive, a model lending package, and land acquisition tools.

The Initiative currently manages about 26 sites, and is comprised of an interdepartmental team of project managers from the city Departments of Environment, Planning and Development, and Law. More than 100 potential additional brownfields sites exist, and will be evaluated based on access and control, estimates of cleanup costs, and property value. Most of these areas have received special designations (model industrial corridors, planned manufacturing districts, and tax

increment financing districts). The city will target 4 of the 26 sites that are large industrial park projects. These targeted sites are located in three communities with poverty rates ranging from 17-44%, unemployment rates of 7.6-17.5%, and minority populations of 71-99%.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Chicago's Brownfields Initiative has operated from a regional perspective, with public health protection as well as economic redevelopment serving as fundamental parts of the plan. Highlights of Chicago's brownfields redevelopment program include:

- Removing the "Kildare Mountain," 600,000 cubic yards of illegally dumped solid waste from an 18-acre site that is now being cleaned up prior to redevelopment;

- Utilizing a \$2 million general obligation bond

to redevelop five sites and leverage a \$54 million loan guarantee from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, along with \$1.6 million from other sources for additional brownfields programs;

Community Profile



Chicago, Illinois

Through its efforts to return the city's abandoned or underused properties to productive use, the Chicago Brownfields Initiative has leveraged \$57.6 million from federal and other sources. There are 26 sites currently targeted under the Initiative.

- Identifying 22 "Model Industrial Corridors" that have been or will be designated tax increment financing districts to encourage further private investment; and
- Redeveloping numerous brownfields sites that has led to job creation or retention. Some examples include the Verson Steel site, where 125 jobs were created and 500 were retained; the Scott Peterson site, where 100 jobs were created and 250 were retained; the Blackstone Manufacturing site, where 100 jobs were created and 200 were retained; the Chicago Turnrite site, where 14 jobs were created and 50 were retained; and the Chicago Dryer site, where 7 jobs were created and 150 were retained.

Chicago has been designated an Environmental Protection Agency Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot; a Department of Housing and a Urban Development Empowerment Zone; and State of Illinois Enterprise Community. Partnerships have also been formed with the Metropolitan Planning Council and the Northern Illinois Planning Commission.

Chicago has also established partnerships with community, civic, and business organizations; developers; lenders; educational institutions; employment training organizations; and neighborhood associations. The Chicago Association of Neighborhood Development Organizations (CANDO) has developed a program that covers real estate marketing, environmental investigation and cleanup, and financing and development opportunities. CANDO has also established a Brownfields Institute to educate community development organizations about brownfields issues and opportunities.

SHOWCASE COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES AND PLANNED ACTIVITIES

Chicago will continue to be a national model as a Showcase Community, working with federal agency partners to enhance brownfields redevelopment and develop public policies that encourage responsible land use. A 1995 study by the University of Illinois at Chicago concluded that urban core development was a more cost effective and equitable route than greenfields development and its resulting sprawl. Chicago will build on the strength of past activities and its established local, regional, state, and federal partnerships. Proposed new partnerships include DePaul University and the mayor's office, both for employment opportunities and job training. The city will also experiment with the use of project management and geographical information software to streamline projects.

Contacts

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For more information on the Brownfields Showcase Communities,
visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/showcase.htm>